

REMARKS

Appropriate subject headings have been added to the specification. Also a claim to foreign priority has been added after the title on page 1. Additionally, the reference to Claim 1, on page 2 in the last full paragraph has been rewritten to include the entire text of amended Claim 1. Additional amendments have been made to improve the syntax of the claims.

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to the claims under 37 CFR §1.75(c) as being in improper multiple dependent form.

Reconsideration is requested.

Claims 6-8 have been rewritten to remove their multiple dependency. Claims 6-8 have been rewritten to specifically depend from amended claim 1. It is therefore requested that the 37 CFR §1.75(c) objection be withdrawn.

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Uchida et al., U.S. Pat. No. 4,752,422 (hereinafter "Unchida et al.") in view of Tsai, U.S. Pat. No. 6,135,427 (hereinafter "Tsai").

Reconsideration is requested.

Unchida et al. and Tsai disclose humidifiers. The present invention is not a humidifier, it is a device for vaporizing disinfecting and/or cleaning fluids and delivering that vapor to an object or surface to be cleaned. Claim 1 recites a "portable container (11)" and has been amended to further comprise "a means for directing said cleaning and/or disinfecting vapour from said device (10)". Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at page 4, lines 9-14, wherein the present application

discloses the use of a flexible tube (23) to direct the path of the vaporized cleaning and/or disinfecting liquid ("portable container" was in claim 1 as originally filed). A portable container and a means for directing said vapor is used to apply the vaporized liquids directly to objects and surfaces to be cleaned. In contrast, humidifiers are used to increase the overall humidity of a room or area, and therefore have to need for a focused flow of water vapor.

Furthermore, neither Unchida et al., not Tsai disclose a device that contains piezoelectric elements. Unchida et al. discloses a vibrating element that operates in ultrasonic frequencies to vaporize water (col. 2 lines 5-9). In contrast, the present invention disclose the use of piezoelectric elements to vibrate and cause the vaporization of cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids (specification page 4, line 15 to page 5, line 1). None of the cited prior art specifically discloses piezoelectric elements.

Therefore, the present invention is not obvious or suggested by the prior art, and it is requested that the above rejection be withdrawn.

In paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable Uchida et al. in view of Tsai.

Reconsideration is requested.

As discussed above, neither Uchida et al., nor Tsai disclose the use of piezoelectric elements to vaporize cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids or a means for directing the flow of the vaporized cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids. It is therefore requested that the §103 rejection of claim 2 be withdrawn.

In paragraph 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being

unpatentable Uchida et al. in view of Tsai as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Dix et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,477,663, (hereinafter "Dix et al.").

Reconsideration is requested.

As discussed above, neither Uchida et al., nor Tsai disclose the use of piezoelectric elements to vaporize said cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids or a means for directing the flow of the vaporized cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids. Dix et al. does not alleviate the deficiencies in Uchida et al. or Tsai. Additionally, while Dix et al. may disclose the use of a handle to transport a humidifier, it does not disclose the use of a handle on an atomizer for cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids, thereby creating a portable device that can be used to apply the vaporized particles to objects or surfaces to be cleaned. The only foreseeable use of the handle in Dix et al. is to transport the humidifier to an entirely new location, since precision direction of water vapor is not necessary to humidify a room.

Therefore, it is requested that the above §103 rejection of claim 7 be withdrawn.

In paragraph 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable Uchida as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Tsuaki, U.S. Pat. No. 4,563,313 (hereinafter "Tsuaki").

Reconsideration is requested.

As discussed above, neither Uchida et al., nor Tsai disclose the use of piezoelectric elements to vaporize said cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids or a means for directing the flow of said cleaning and/or disinfecting fluids. Tsuaki et al. does not alleviate the deficiencies in Uchida

et al. or Tsai, and it is therefore requested that the above §103 rejection of claim 8 be withdrawn.

Based upon the above amendments and remarks, applicant respectfully submits that all of Claims 1-8 are now allowable over the prior art and that the present application is in proper form for allowance.

An early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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